THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The Government has so far permitted fifty eight (58) companies to uplink 161 private TV channels from India. Seventeen (17) companies allowed to uplink sixty eight (68) TV channels have varying degrees of foreign equity. The remaining 41 companies permitted to uplink 93 TV channels have 100% Indian equity. Further, this Ministry does not maintain records of channels uplinked from outside India, which are also available to viewers in India.

(b) and (c) The Government is contemplating the setting up of an autonomous body to regulate the content on television channels.

DTH operations by Prasar Bharati

1500. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prasar Bharati, which launched its DTH operations last year, is considering subscriber base of 5 million by the year-end;

(b) if so, whether according to CEO of the organizations over 3 million have opted for the service uptil now;

(c) whether 10 per cent of this response has come from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat;

(d) whether private channels agreed to Prasar Bharati's proposal to charge carriage fees for its DTH platform; and

(e) if so, by when Prasar Bharati is likely to complete its contract?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati's DTH service, DD Direct+, is a free-to-air service and as such it does not have subscribers. However, news reports and market sources indicate that over four million receive systems have been sold out in different parts of the country since the launch of the DD Direct Plus service on 16th December 2004. It is likely to increase by the year-end.

(c) According to market sources, over 16% of this response is from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

(d) and (e) No carriage fee is being charged from the private channels included in the said service at present.

Sale and exchange of newspapers and magazines

1501. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
DR. KARAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the experts have demanded from Government and Pakistan to immediately remove all restrictions on sale and exchange of newspapers, magazines and beaming of news channels from either country;

(b) if so, whether the experts have demanded for issuance of multi entry visas for scribes working in the region;

(c) if so, whether this demand was raised in a resolution passed at the General Body meeting of the Chandi Press Club;

(d) if so, whether both India and Pakistan have agreed to remove curb on Indo-Pak media; and

(e) if so, by when both the Government would consider to remove these curbs?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) As informed by the Ministry of External Affairs, Pakistan exercises a blanket ban on Indian films, audio-visual media and print media. Pakistan TV channels and civil society have been actively lobbying to lift the ban on Indian TV channels. The Government of India has asked Pakistan to remove the existing ban on Indian TV channels to permit commercial exchange of newspapers, books and periodicals, and to remove the ban on Indian films.

(b) and (c) The Government has not received any such demand, recently.